

Appl. No. 09/708,492

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REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Office Action ("Action") mailed March 28, 2006. Claims 1-31 and 33-48 are pending in the application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks.

THE CLAIM REJECTIONS BASED ON WORLEY

Claims 1-31 and 33-48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,651,190 to Worley et al. ("Worley"). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1 recites:

A multiple port unit adapted for coupling one or more computers to multiple peripheral devices over a network, said multiple port unit comprising:
plural network ports, each of said network ports being configured to couple the multiple port unit to a computer over a respective network link;
plural communication serial ports, each of said communication serial ports being configured to couple the multiple port unit to a peripheral device; and
a control unit configured to interrogate the network links and to communicatively couple said communication serial ports to a selected one of said network ports based on the interrogation of the network links, the control unit being further configured to determine whether it is time to interrogate the network links.
(Emphasis added.)

For at least the following reasons, Worley does not anticipate claim 1.

First, Worley does not disclose "a multiple port unit" comprising "a control unit configured to interrogate the network links and to communicatively couple said communication serial ports to a selected one of said network ports based on the interrogation of the network links" (emphasis added), as recited in claim 1. On page 2, the Action appears to be relying on the remote maintenance controller 100 of Worley as allegedly anticipating the claimed multiple port unit comprising a control unit. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Worley discloses a remote maintenance controller 100 for monitoring and controlling a host computer 110 and its operating system. See Worley, Abstract, FIG. 1. The remote

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maintenance controller 100 has a microcontroller 20 that includes an I/O interface 30 coupled to I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 of the host computer 110. (See Worley, FIG. 2, col. 4, ll. 51-56). The remote maintenance controller 100 includes a wireless IP packet interface 70 (either Cellular Modem or Cellular IP) to allow a remote computer station 130 to communicate with the remote maintenance controller 100 should a failure occur in a land based wired communication link between an Internet Service Provider (ISP) 120 and the host computer 110. See Worley, FIG. 3, col. 6, ll. 54-58, col. 7, ll. 35-53. In effect, Worley's system allows a service technician to remotely service the host computer 110 via the wireless IP packet interface 70 when a failure occurs in the land based wired communication link between the ISP 120 and the host computer 110.

Worley does not disclose that the microcontroller 20 of the remote maintenance controller 100 interrogates plural network links (e.g., (1) the wired link between the host computer 110 and the ISP 120 of Worley, and (2) the wireless link using the wireless IP packet interface 70), and then, based on this interrogation of the wired link and the wireless link, communicatively couples the I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 to either a network port associated with the wireless IP packet interface 70 or to the network port associated with the wired link to the ISP 20.

Instead, Worley discloses that a service technician wirelessly retrieves information from the remote maintenance controller 100 to remotely identify problems associated with a host computer 110 before traveling to the site of the host computer 110. Specifically, Worley discloses that a "customer calls [the internet service provider] and says our Internet connection is not working." See Worley, col. 10, ll. 10-11. A service person wirelessly communicates with the host computer 110 using the wireless IP packet interface 70 of the remote maintenance

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controller 100 (also described in Worley as the "hot maintenance box") to remotely identify the problem with the host computer 110. See Worley, col. 6, ll. 48-64; col. 10, ll. 11-24. The service technician may retrieve "console messages" stored at the remote maintenance controller 100 from "serial ports that continuously monitor" the attached devices to identify the problem with the host computer 110. See Worley, col. 10, ll. 17-33. Thus, the service technician wirelessly communicates with the host computer 110 using the wireless IP packet interface 70 of the remote maintenance controller 100 to identify problems with the host computer 110.

However, Worley does not disclose that the microcontroller 20 of the remote maintenance controller 100 interrogates plural network links (e.g., (1) the wired link between the host computer 110 and the ISP 120 of Worley, and (2) the wireless link using the wireless IP packet interface 70), and then, based on the interrogation of the wired link and the wireless link, communicatively couples the I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 to either the wireless link of the wireless IP packet interface 70 or to the wired link to the ISP 20.

Moreover, Worley does not disclose communicatively coupling the I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 to network ports based on an interrogation of network links. Instead, Worley discloses that the I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 continue communicating with the same device they did before the communication failure between the host computer 110 and the ISP 120 (e.g., the Ethernet port 86 remains connected to an Ethernet, and is not communicatively coupled to a network port based on an interrogation of a network link). See Worley, col. 10, lines 10-24. The service technician in Worley is able to wirelessly retrieve "host logs," which are stored at the remote maintenance controller 100, containing information received by the remote maintenance controller 100 from the I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90, which monitor their respective devices. See Worley, col. 10, line 17 to col. 11, line 13. Hence, the

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microcontroller 20 of the remote maintenance controller 100 in Worley does not communicatively couple the I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 to a network port associated with the wired link or to a network port associated with the wireless link based on an interrogation of the wired link and the wireless link. Notably, Worley does not disclose any relationship between an interrogation of network links and communicatively coupling the I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 to a network port associated with network links. Therefore, Worley does not disclose “a multiple port unit” comprising “a control unit configured to interrogate the network links and to communicatively couple said communication serial ports to a selected one of said network ports based on the interrogation of the network links” (emphasis added), as recited in claim 1.

Although Worley discloses determining that the server coupled to the host computer 110 does not respond to “network pings” (see Worley, col. 9, ll. 43, col. 10, ll. 47-49), Worley does not teach that the microcontroller 20 of the remote maintenance controller 100 pings the wired link to the ISP 20 and the wireless link associated with the wireless IP packet interface 70, and then, based on the pings of the wired link and the wireless link, communicatively couples the I/O connections 82, 84, 86, 88, and 90 to either a network port associated with the wireless link or to a network port associated with the wired link.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, the Action has not shown that Worley anticipates claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn. Claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

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Claims 2-10 and 46-48, which depend from claim 1, also are believed to be in condition for allowance due to their dependence on an allowable claim and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Independent claims 11, 22, 30, and 40 are allowable for reasons analogous to those given in support of claim 1. Dependent claims 12-20, 23-29, 31, 33-39, and 41-45, which respectively depend from claims 11, 22, 30, and 40, also are believed to be in condition for allowance due to their dependence on an allowable claim and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

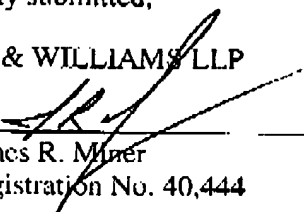
Conclusion

For at least the reasons outlined above, Applicant respectfully asserts that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below. For any fees due in connection with filing this Response the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 50-0206.

Respectfully submitted,

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